

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USDA FOR FAS/GRAIN AND FEED DIVISION

E.O. 11652: N/A
RAGS: EARG, GE
SUBJECT; PROGRESS OF THE 1977 HARVEST

REFS: A) BERLIN 6858; B) BERLIN 6698; C) BERLIN 6542

1. GENERALLY FAVORABLE WEATHER OVER THE PAST WEEK HAS RESULTED IN AN INCREASE IN THE TEMPO OF THE SERIOUSLY DELAYED GDR GRAIN HARVEST. AUGUST 25 NEUES DEUTSCHLAND REPORTED THAT A TOTAL OF 64.2 PERCENT OF THE AREA SOWN WITH GRAIN HAD BEEN HARVESTED. ROUGHLY 15 PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA SOWN HAS BEEN HARVESTED IN THE PAST WEEK; ND REPORTED THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HARVEST, A DAILY HARVESTING RATE OF FOUR PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA SOWN HAD BEEN ACHIEVED (AUGUST 24).

2. ND ALSO REPORTED MORE DETAIL ON THE USE OF NON-AGRICULTURAL WORKERS AND SOLDIERS IN EFFORTS TO DRY AND STORE GRAIN. IN THE HALLE AREA, SOUTHWEST OF
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BERLIN, 1,200 "HELPERS," INCLUDING 700 SOLDIERS, WERE REPORTED WORKING IN FOUR SHIFTS TO DRY THE GRAIN. IN THE POTSDAM AREA 840 HELPERS, INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND SOLDIERS, WERE BEING EMPLOYED IN SIMILAR EFFORTS; IN THE LEIPZIG AREA, ND REPORTED A FIGURE OF 100 PERSONS "INCLUDING NUMEROUS SOLDIERS."

3. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE GDR HAS INADEQUATE DRYING FACILITIES TO PREPARE THE MOIST GRAIN FOR STORAGE. AS A RESULT INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT--CRANES AND POWER SHOVELS, FOR EXAMPLE--ARE BEING EMPLOYED TO CONTINUOUSLY TURN THE MOUNDS OF GRAIN IN THE OPEN AIR. EMBASSY'S AGRICULTURAL EXPERT (EASTERN AFFAIRS/USBER) ESTIMATES THAT THE GDR WILL HARVEST ABOUT 9.0 MILLION METRIC TONS (MMT) OF THE POTENTIAL 9.5 MMT OF GRAIN ESTIMATED TO BE IN THE FIELDS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HARVEST. THE POOR CONDITION OF THE GRAIN IN THE FIELDS, AS WELL AS THE HIGH MOISTURE CONTENT OF THE HARVESTED GRAIN AND THE PRIMITIVE DRYING FACILITIES LEADS TO AN EARLY CONCLUSION THAT MUCH OF THE GRAIN HARVESTED AND STORED WILL BE OF POOR QUALITY. (RECORD GDR GRAIN HARVEST IN WAS ABOUT 8.2 MMT.) BOLEN

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